

THE CONSTITUTION OF NORTH CAROLINA.

THE Constitution or form of Government, agreed to and resolved upon by the Representatives of the Freemen of the State of North Carolina, elected and chosen for that particular purpose, in Congress assembled, at Halifax, the eighteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.

WHEREAS, allegiance and protection are in their nature reciprocal, and the one should of right be refused when the other is withdrawn. And whereas, George the Third, King of Great Britain, and late Sovereign of the British American Colonies, hath not only withdrawn from them his protection, but, by an act of the British Legislature, declared the inhabitants of these States out of the protection of the British Crown, and all their property found upon the high seas liable to be seized and confiscated to the uses mentioned in the said act. And the said George the Third has also sent fleets and armies to prosecute a cruel war against them, for the purpose of reducing the inhabitants of the said colonies to a state of abject slavery. In consequence whereof, all government under the said King, within the said colonies, hath ceased, and a total dissolution of government in many of them hath taken place. And whereas, the Continental Congress having considered the premises, and other previous violations of the rights of the good people of America, have therefore declared, that the Thirteen United Colonies are, of right, wholly absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, or any other foreign jurisdiction whatsoever, and that the said colonies now are, and forever shall be, free and independent States. Wherefore, in our present State, in order to prevent anarchy and confusion, it becomes necessary that a government should be established in the State: Therefore, We, the Representatives of the Freemen of North Carolina, chosen and assembled in Congress for the express purpose of framing a constitution, under the authority of the people, most conducive to their happiness and prosperity, do declare that a Government for this State shall be established in manner and form following, to wit: